

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04923 241109Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 4923

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PPDC US LE XF
SUBJ: SARKIS REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER OF AUGUST 15

REF: STATE 205963

1. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS ON AUGUST 24 HANDED ME THE REPLY
OF PRESIDENT SARKIS TO THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO HIM OF AUGUST
15. IT READS AS FOLLOWS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

"I WISH TO THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR LETTER OF AUGUST 15,
WHEREIN YOU HAVE CONVEYED TO ME SOME OF YOUR VIEWS CONCERNING THE
NEXT SUMMIT MEETING ON THE MIDDLE EAST, TO BE HELD IN CAMP DAVID.

"IT IS EVIDENT THAT LEBANON IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED FOR A MUL-
TIPPLICITY OF REASONS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUST AND LASTING
PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SUCH A PEACE, GIVEN THE BROADER CON-
TEXT OF THE PROBLEM, CANNOT BE A JUST PEACE IF IT DOES NOT TAKE
INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO
THEIR OWN LAND. THIS IS WHY WE HAVE UNCEASINGLY REPEATED THAT
THE SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IS THE KEY TO PEACE IN
THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THAT THE VARIOUS PARTIES CONCERNED, SHOULD
BE ASSOCIATED IN THIS PROCESS THROUGH THE MOST APPROPRIATE MEANS.

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"HENCE, EVERY ARRANGEMENT THAT WILL NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION
THIS OBJECTIVE, WILL NOT BRING A SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS, BUT MAY
IN VIEW, ENTAIL A CERTAIN RISK OF AGGRAVATION OF THE STATE OF
TENSION, WHICH DANGER, I AM SURE YOU ARE KEEN TO AVOID.

"AT THIS OCCASION, AND GIVEN THE IMPETUS WHICH YOU HAVE IMPARTED

TO THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT, I WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY TO YOU ONCE MORE, MY PREOCCUPATIONS CONCERNING AN ASPECT OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, WHICH PARTICULARLY CONCERNS LEBANON IN ITS MOST VITAL INTEREST: THE FATE OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN MY COUNTRY. LEBANON HAS ALREADY EXPRESSED ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION, THROUGH OUR FOREIGN MINISTER, MR. FOUAD BOUTROS DURING HIS VISIT TO YOU IN NEW YORK, IN OCTOBER 1977, THEN VERBALLY TO YOUR SECRETARY OF STATE, MR. CYRUS VANCE DURING HIS VISITS TO BEIRUT, THEN SOLEMNLY IN MY OWN ADDRESS TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, IN JANUARY 1978, AND FINALLY THROUGH THE VARIOUS DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS: IN NO CASE CAN LEBANON ACCEPT THE INTEGRATION ON ITS TERRITORY OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES NOW LIVING HERE, OR ANY PORTION OF THOSE REFUGEES.

"THIS ATTITUDE, STEMMING FROM OUR LEGITIMATE CONCERN TO PRESERVE THE DELICATE BALANCE OF LEBANON'S SOCIETY AND THE ESSENCE OF ITS PERSONALITY, REJOINS THE NECESSITY OF AVOIDING THE CREATION OF ANOTHER PROBLEM STILL MORE SERIOUS, UNDER THE FALLACIOUS PRETEXT OF SOLVING THE PRESENT ONE. THIS ADDED CONCERN IS OF COURSE SUBSEQUENT TO THE OBLIGATION WHICH WE SHOULD ALL FEEL TO RENDER JUSTICE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

"LEBANON PRESENTLY SHELTERS ON ITS TERRITORY OVER 600,000 PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, WHEREAS OUR TOTAL POPULATION DOES NOT EXCEED 3 MILLION; YOU WILL APPRECIATE THAT THESE FIGURES ARE SUFFICIENTLY ELOQUENT IN THEMSELVES. LET ME ADD TO THIS THAT LEBANON AS A STATE WILL FIND ITSELF IN MORTAL DANGER, OVER AND ABOVE, THE
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DANGER THAT EVERY MEASURE OF INTEGRATION OF THE PALESTINIANS WILL REPRESENT TO ITS DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND LIBERAL INSTITUTIONS.

"I DO NOT DOUBT MR. PRESIDENT THAT YOU WILL FULLY APPRECIATE THE IMPERATIVE REASONS THAT HAVE DICTATED TO ME THIS POSITION, AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT DURING YOUR VARIOUS NEGOTIATIONS, WHATEVER THEIR FRAMEWORK AND OUTCOME, YOU WILL SHARE OUR CONCERN THAT NO CONSEQUENCES WILL AFFECT LEBANON OR HAVE ANY IMPLICATION CONCERNING THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM THAT I HAVE HERE STATED.

"WITH ALL MY BEST WISHES.
SINCERELY, ELIAS SARKIS" END TEXT.

3. ORIGINAL OF SARKIS' LETTER SENT TO NEA/ARN FOR TRANSMISSION TO WHITE HOUSE.
KINSOLVING

SECRET

NNN

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